To: Ty Cashman 381-8138
Greg Fox 397-8318
David Katz 916-756-7188
Mayumi Oda 383-6614
Wade Rose 668-4531
Peter Warshall 520-624-5406
From: Mike Stone 415-332-1716 fax 415-332-3110
Date: October 18, 1996
Re: Point Mission

We all received a fax from Ty on October 8, asking that each of us attempt to draft a one-paragraph mission statement in order to get us started on that project. Since no one else has stepped forward, I'll stick my neck out first.

I still think that the mission needs to be the beginning point of our retreat, not the conclusion. I also think that defining Point's mission is the job of the board, not whatever sub-group of invitees can attend the retreat. That isn't to *assume* that the six of us who now constitute the board share a joint vision. It is to say we need to work very hard between now and November 2 to see whether we do—whether, as Ty quoted Eric Douglas, we are singing the same tune.

So here's some fodder from other people, and one stab at a statement.

Mike

Background. These might be considered other people's statements of mission. Maybe reading them—slowly—will be helpful to you:

In Context: "Fostering sustainability—sustainably" [Context Institute fund-raising letter]

Wired Ventures, Inc.: "The Company aims to create 'smart media for smart people around the world' - high-quality information and entertainment products aimed at a well-educated, affluent, technologically savvy, and influential consumer group. Its mission is to build a new kind of global, diversified media company for the 21st century, utilizing its ability to create compelling, branded content with attitude across multiple media, its research and technical capabilities, its strong connection to consumers and advertisers, and its commitment to journalistic and artistic excellence" [Wired Ventures prospectus].

Whole Earth Catalog: "We *are* as gods and might as well get used to it. So far remotely done power and glory — as via government, big business, formal education, church — has succeeded to the point where gross defects obscure actual gains. In response to this dilemma and to these gains a realm of intimate, personal power is developing — power of the individual to conduct his own education, find his own inspiration, shape his own environment, and share his adventure with whoever is interested. Tools that aid this process are sought and promoted by the WHOLE EARTH CATALOG" [Stewart's original WER purpose statement].

Point Bylaws: "POINT . . . is a nonprofit, charitable, non-stock company organized . . . for the purpose of promoting, financing and undertaking research into problems of economic, behavioral and sociological importance for the purpose of benefiting broad segments of the local and national community . . ."

A former Point executive's WELL posting, including "central principles that have made us an enduring feature of the national landscape":

The interconnectedness of all things
The importance of Tools without Politics
The Value of Significant Work to individuals and the larger culture
Hope instead of Fear
An eye on the fringe as a source of new ideas and technologies
First person experience as a generalizer
Eclectic coverage
Money as a measure, not an object
Practical Utopianism
Freedom from bureaucratic peer review

Democracy as a consequence of passion, commitment, responsibility and vigor
The value of a good prank

So What Do I Have to Say for Myself?

Here's one start. I'm not at all satisfied with it (Annie Lamott's technical phrase for this is "shitty first draft"), but I'm going to send it out in hopes of getting everyone else to work on this task. If it doesn't help you, I hope it pushes you to doing something better.

Point's mission is to nurture the world-wide community of people seeking sustainable, sane, and satisfying lives. Working at the juncture of technology, society and the natural world, Point offers evaluation and access to tools worth using. It identifies resources that help people learn and think for themselves. It constructs avenues for them to share their findings with each other. It gathers news about sustainability successes and creates forums for debate about sustainable practice. It publicizes diverse efforts to develop the core curriculum for the 21st century: pragmatic ideas and methods for understanding the world as a whole and for living life as whole people. It searches for provocative ideas at the fringe. It fosters experiments in learning and action. It honors health and humor. It promotes appropriateness, wholeness, diversity, and hope.